

# Safety Facts/Media Information

- The fatality rate on the nation's highways in 2003 was the lowest since record keeping began 29 years ago. U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta credits campaigns to encourage safety belt use and discourage impaired driving, tougher safety belt and drunk driving laws, and improved vehicle safety standards.
- Nationally in 2003, a total of 42,643 people died and 2.89 million were injured, compared to 43,005 people killed and 2.93 million injured in 2002.
- In 2003, U.S. Department of Transportation Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) indicate that there were 294 people killed, down from 323 in 2002, a 10% decrease. This is one of the highest percentage decreases in the United States.
- Nationally, passenger vehicle occupant fatalities dropped to 31,904 – the largest decrease since 1992. This decline is consistent with increases in safety belt use and more crashworthy vehicles.
- In 2003, there was also a decline in the number of unbelted fatalities, again reflecting an increase in safety belt usage. However, 56% of those killed in passenger vehicles were not wearing safety belts. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for every age 4 through 33.
- **83%!!** Connecticut's percentage of safety belt use in 2003, after three consecutive years at 78%.
- Ejection from the vehicle is one of the most injurious events that can happen to a person in a crash. Safety belts are effective in preventing total ejection: only 1 percent of the occupants reported to have been using restraints were totally ejected.
- Research has found that lap/shoulder safety belts, when used correctly, reduce the risk of fatal injury for front-seat passengers by 45%. Child safety seats have been found to reduce fatal injury by up to 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers in passenger cars.
- A total of 17,013 alcohol-related fatalities were recorded in 2003, down by almost 3% from the previous year. NHTSA statistical data indicates that in Connecticut, of the 294 fatalities, 131, (or 45%) were alcohol-related. This is a 9% decrease from the previous year.
- You Drink & Drive. You Lose increase enforcement efforts is December 15, 2004 – January 2, 2005.
- The mission of our mobilizations is to develop partnerships to cooperatively save lives, prevent injuries and reduce traffic-related health care and economic costs resulting from impaired driving.